

Hingham Affordable Housing Trust

Further Benchmark Communities Survey on ADU's

- Based on questions from the Planning Board, the Trust asked HAHT Staff to survey relevant benchmark communities concerning any available information on -
 - (1) affordability of ADUs offered;
 - (2) age of homeowners offering ADUs; and
 - (3) community responses to ADUs.
- Staff reached out to contacts in **Concord, Lexington, Norwell, Scituate, Weston, and Westwood** in October 2022 and again in February 2023
- Towns chosen because they offer ADUs without familial restrictions and were responsive to Staff outreach. No other basis for selection.

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Benchmark Communities Survey, cont.

- The following chart identifies the contact person and role of each person who provided information
- Extent of experience with rental ADUs vary from Weston, which has offered them for over 30 years and has between 50 and 75, and Norwell, which only lifted the familial restriction in 2022
- We also spoke to Tim Czerwienski, Milton's Director of Planning and Community Development, about Milton's bylaw. Milton still has a familial restriction applicable to its Temporary Apartments, and thus was not among the peers that Staff focused on. It is in the process of revising the bylaw.

Experience of Selected Benchmark Communities With ADUs

Community	Contact	Year By-law Est'd	No. of ADUs	Rent Data Collected by Community?	Owner Age Data Collected by Community?	Enforcement Issues	Neighbor Issues	Other Comments
Concord	Heather Carey , Zoning Administrative Assistant	2020	9 permits issued	No	No	None known	No concerns.	Allow ADU's as of right if application conforms to bylaw restrictions; otherwise by special permit.
Lexington	Sharon Coffey , Zoning Office, Julie Krakauer Moore , Zoning Administrator	2016	25	No	No	None	None.	Familial restriction removed in 2016; detached ADUs permitted. Some ADU's allowed by right under Zoning Bylaw. Those requiring Special Permits are routinely approved except where inadequate police/fire access, or where numerous additional Special Permits are requested.
Norwell	Roberta Mahoney , Board of Appeals Admin. Asst. Ilana Quirk , Dir. of Planning and Comm'y Dev't Brian Greenberg , Chair, Planning Board	Unkown / updated in 2022	12	No	No	None	None.	Expanded to allow both non familial and detached in 2022. Chair of the Planning Board is of a strong advocate of their adoption and would be happy to appear if helpful to discuss their drafting process and limited experience to date.
Scituate	Robert Vogal , Building Comm'r, Zoning Enf't Officer	1989 - Attached / 2010 detached	134	No	No	One from an abutter. Others dealt with during initial permitting.	All addressed during permitting process. Abutter acceptance not an issue.	Generally working well. Requests are trending upward. All abutter issues addressed at the Planning Board public hearing during permitting process. Only enforcement efforts have related to existing, unpermitted ADUs, typically through a permit application for renovations or through Water and Sewer Departments as result of hookup and billing processes. No fines or court actions have resulted.
Weston	John F. Field , P.E., Land Use Coordinator, Buildings Inspector, and Zoning Enforcement Officer	Adopted in 1978, amended in 1987.	50-75	No	No	Only to ensure succeeding owners comply with permit renewal requirements.	A few noise complaints relating to Regis College students.	They are building about 4-5 a year. There is no familial restriction. Owner must either reside in the principal residence or the ADU. Generally, ADUs are received favorably in town.
Westwood	Karen Flynn , Zoning and Licensing Agent	1994; familial restriction lifted in 2015	63	No	No	No requests for enforcement.	Some concerns raised at point of proposal.	No ongoing complaints. Average 2-3 permits a year (4 in 2022). Permit holders must recertify every four years via online application. No age or rent amounts are asked during that process. Most popular use is for aging parents. Building Commissioner has identified several non-permitted ADUs and notified owner of a Zoning violation and Zoning Board has ensured permitting compliance.

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Conclusions

- None of the towns track rent charged for ADUs, and thus cannot provide information relevant to affordability
- None of the towns track age of the owners offering ADUs, and thus cannot provide information on extent to which ADUs have assist seniors to age in place
- Only one of the six towns, Weston, reports any neighbor complaints concerning ADUs. Weston, unlike Hingham, hosts a college, and the complaints result from rental of ADUs to college students.
- The other towns uniformly report that there are no known instances of having to take enforcement actions, or even any noted neighbor complaints. All abutter concerns have been raised and successfully addressed during permitting.
- Scituate and Weston specifically noted that ADUs are well received in town
- In short, this survey turned up no problems with implementation of ADUs; and it appears that we will be unable to identify benchmark community data on affordability or “aging in place.”